

"School and classroom effects on bullying and peer victimization."

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Abstract

Rationale. Most studies about bullying focused on individual characteristics of bullies and victims. Only very few studies have investigated the effect of school and classroom factors on bullying. These studies indicated that between-classroom variance is higher than between-school variance. From theoretical and practical points of view, one key issue is to know if those school and classroom effects are related to educational practices rather than to the composition of the student body. At the school level, available studies only controlled for school size and mean socio-economic status. At the classroom level, composition effects have not been tested. Regarding educational practices, existing studies relied on different theoretical background and measured different dimensions: bullying and peer victimization were found to be associated with performance goal structure, teacher-student relationships, autonomy-support, structure and support. In the absence of integrative studies, it is...

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School and classroom effects on bullying and peer victimization.

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Definition and prevalence

- School bullying = deliberate and repetitive negative actions toward one student perceived as less powerful (Olweus, 1993).
 - Verbal, physical, social, property, cyber
- One of the most prevalent form of school violence (Galand et al., 2004; Mayer & Frulong, 2010).
 - In Western countries, 28% of students between 11 and 15 year-old are directly involved in bullying : 13% as victims, 11% as bullies, 4% as bully-victims (Craig et al. , 2009).

Consequences

- Longitudinal studies
 - For victims: internalizing problems (Reijntjes et al., 2010)
 - For perpetrators: externalizing problems (Farrington et al., 2011)
 - For witnesses: negative perceptions of school climate (Janosz et al., 2012)

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Questions

- Most studies about bullying look at individual characteristics of bullies and victims.
 - They focus intervention on the individual level and provide few guidelines for intervention at the classroom or school levels.
- Is bullying related to the school or classroom attended by a student?
- Which factors could explain these between school/classroom variations?

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School and classroom effects?

- Few studies
 - The percentage of students categorized as bullies or victims differs from one classroom/school to another (Atria & Strohmeier, 2007).
 - Multilevel studies indicated that between-classroom variance is higher than between-school variance (Barth et al., 2004; Mercer et al., 2009).
- What reflect those school and classroom effects?
 - individual characteristics of the students
 - composition of the student body
 - educational practices

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Composition effect?

- Individual characteristics
 - Gender, age, socio-economic status; slightly related to between-classroom variance (Khoury-Kassaby, 2011)
- Composition of the student body
 - At the school level: school size, mean socio-economic status, ethnic composition; low explicative power (Gregory et al., 2010).
 - At the classroom level, not tested.

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Effect of educational practices?

- Different theoretical background and measures, no integrative study.
- Structure
 - Classroom management (Galloway & Roland, 2004)
 - Direct intervention (Kochenderfer & Pelletier, 2008)
- Support
 - autonomy-support (Roth et al., 2010)
 - Teacher-students relationships (Meehan et al., 2003)
- Goal structures
 - Performance goal structure (Galand et al., 2012)
 - Mastery goal structure (Kaplan et al., 2002)

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Aims

- to assess the size of school and classroom effects on bullying/victimization
- to investigate the contribution of school and classroom composition to these effects
- to test the contribution of a variety of educational practices to between-schools and -classrooms differences.

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Method

- Sample : 3.240 students in grade 9 (mean age 15) from 234 classrooms nested in 64 urban schools; balanced between gender
- Procedure: anonymous questionnaire
- Measures:
 - Bullying: 8 items, alpha = .83
 - Victimization: 8 items, alpha = .84

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Measures: educational practices

- Classroom management: 6 items, alpha = .74
- Direct intervention: 5 items, alpha = .62
- Autonomy-support: 6 items, alpha = .74
- Teacher-students relationships: 6 items, alpha = .75
- Performance goal structure: 8 items, alpha = .78
- Mastery goal structure: 10 items, alpha = .80
- Students perceptions of teachers' behaviors aggregated at the classroom level

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Results

- Multilevel analyses (HLM)
 - Bullying - empty model
 - ICC (classroom) = .05
 - ICC (school) = .002 (ns)
 - Victimization - empty model
 - ICC (classroom) = .049
 - ICC (school) = .015

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Individual effects

Fix effects	Bullying		Victimization	
	Coefficient	Standard error	Coefficient	Standard error
Intercept	0.40	(.02)***	0.63	(.03)***
<u>Individual level</u>				
Gender	0.21	(.03)***	-0.02	(.03)
Age	-0.04	(.02)	0.02	(.02)
Grade retention	0.07	(.01)***	-0.01	(.02)
Parental unemployment	0.03	(.02)	-0.01	(.02)
Parents place of birth	0.01	(.01)	-0.01	(.01)
Parental education level	0.02	(.01)	0.01	(.01)

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Composition effects

Fix effects	Bullying		Victimization	
	Coefficient	Standard error	Coefficient	Standard error
Intercept	0.40	(.02)***	0.63	(.03)***
<u>Individual level</u>				
Gender	0.21	(.03)***	-0.02	(.03)
Grade retention	0.07	(.01)***	-0.01	(.02)
<u>Classroom level</u>				
<i>Composition</i>				
School track	-	-	-	-
Class size	-	-	-	-
Boys ratio	0.02	(.07)	0.15	(.08) ^a
Grade retention ratio	-	-	-	-
Parental unemployment ratio	-	-	-	-
Parents place of birth ratio	-	-	-	-
Mean parental education level	-	-	-	-

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Educational practices

Fix effects	Bullying		Victimization	
	Coefficient	Standard error	Coefficient	Standard error
Intercept	0.40	(.02)***	0.63	(.03)***
<u>Individual level</u>				
Gender	0.21	(.03)***	-0.02	(.03)
Grade retention	0.07	(.01)***	-0.01	(.02)
<u>Classroom level</u>				
<i>Composition</i>				
Boys ratio	0.02	(.07)	0.15	(.08) ^a
<i>Educational practices</i>				
Direct intervention	-0.21	(.08)*	-0.17	(.06)**
Classroom management	-	-	-	-
Autonomy support	-	-	-	-
Teacher-students relationships	-	-	-	-
Performance goal structure	0.15	(.06)*	0.17	(.07)*
Mastery goal structure	-	-	-	-

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Summary

- Multilevel analyses showed no significant school effects and small classroom effects on bullying and victimization.
- At the classroom level, composition effects were null to very small.
- Classroom management and competitive goal structure explained between-classroom variations in bullying (39%) and victimization (28%).

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Discussion

- Classroom effect-size consistent with previous studies.
- Bullying is not just an individual problem.
- Some educational practices are associated with reduced bullying and victimization
 - Quick and systematic reaction from the teachers in case of conflict between students
 - Teacher behaviors avoiding competition, social comparison and inequality of treatment
- Some between-classroom variance remains unexplained.
- These results suggest that interventions targeted at daily classroom practices could be a way to prevent or reduce school bullying and peer victimization.

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Thank you for your attention!

For more information:

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- www.uclouvain.be/violence-ecole.html
- Galand, B., Hospel, V. & Baudoin, N. (in press), Prévenir le harcèlement via les pratiques de classe? Une étude multiniveaux [Bullying prevention through classroom practices? A multilevel analysis]. *Revue Québécoise de Psychologie*.